

# **Renton Housing Repair Assistance Program's Spring Home Repair Checklist**

Spring is coming and your house has sheltered you from the winds, rain, and snow of the winter. Now it is time for you to take care of your house by taking the time to look for damage winter may have caused and by performing repairs and maintenance to protect your homeowner investment and keep your home in good shape.

## **EXTERIOR**

1. Check rain gutters and downspouts to see if they are clear of debris and securely anchored to the eave line and the house wall.
  - a. If they are clogged, remove the debris. Use a garden hose, a gutter scoop and a nylon brush to flush the gutters and downspouts. Use a wire brush to remove rust and peeling paint. Repair leaks and seal joints with a high-quality exterior grade caulk. Prime bare spots and add a fresh coat of paint.
  - b. If you have downspout water ponding around your house direct the water away from the foundation.
2. Inspect your fascia, siding and trim for damage such as cracking, splitting, warping, peeling paint or decay.
  - a. Replace worn siding sections and add additional nails or screws if the nails have popped out of them.
  - b. One of the best means of brightening dingy siding is with a thorough pressure washing with water. If the siding is chalked or streaked, scrub it using a nylon truck brush along with a mild solution of powdered laundry detergent and hot water. Rinse thoroughly with fresh water.
  - c. Inspect the condition of the caulking where two different materials meet, for example where wood siding joins the foundation's wall or at inside corners. Improper caulking provides an avenue for moisture to get inside your walls
  - d. Apply new caulk and paint where needed.
3. Check to see if the exterior door and window frames and trim need work.
  - a. Apply new caulk and paint where needed.
  - b. Remove window and door screens and give them a cleaning with a solution of powdered laundry detergent and hot water. Brush the screens with a nylon brush and give the screens and frames a rinsing with a garden hose. Mend tears and replace deteriorating material with new fabric. Lubricate hinges on screen doors and adjust hydraulic closers to make sure that the door closes fully.
4. Inspect your roof. Often you can do this without getting on the roof by using binoculars to inspect from the ground or a ladder near the house.
  - a. Look for wind, snow, or ice damage such as loose or missing roof shingles. Have damaged shingles replaced if they're on less than 20% of the roof. Reroof if damaged shingles cover more than 20% of the roof.
  - b. Check the supports, seals, and wire anchors of equipment such as television service hardware and electrical mast.
  - c. Look in the attic for water stains on the underside of the roof sheathing and on the rafters. They are telltale signs of a roof leak that might not yet produce enough water to make its way to your ceiling. You don't need to wait till it rains to check a roof for leaks. Use a garden hose at suspicious areas to determine if your roof is leaking.
5. Inspect masonry chimneys for cracks and missing mortar around bricks and blocks.
6. Inspect basement and crawl space walls and floors for signs of dampness or water stains. Check vents in the crawl space to make sure the screen or wire mesh covering is secure and in good repair.

7. Check wooden or concrete steps for cracked, chipped, broken, or uneven sections and failing caulk.
  - a. Clean and degrease exterior concrete surfaces with a commercial concrete cleaner-degreaser. Use cat litter to absorb as much of the grease or oil first—by grinding it into the area with the soles of your shoes.
  - b. Caulking can take a real beating during winter. Caulk tends to crack in concrete, foundations and basement walls.
8. Check the exterior and interior sides of foundation walls and the basement floor for cracks.
9. Inspect exposed wooden support members and floor framing for decay or damage from pests.
10. Decks, fencing and other exterior wood finishes should be cleaned and finished regularly to keep them looking good and to extend their life. Most high-quality exterior stains and wood finishes will usually only last for two to three seasons.
11. Landscape irrigation:
  - a. Clean, adjust, lubricate and tighten sprinkler heads. Most heads have an adjustment screw that will control water volume which affects the area covered by the sprinkler.
  - b. Replace broken filters.
  - c. Clean or replace valve diaphragms to make sure that they are sealing properly.
  - d. If you have an automatic timer, adjust the program to provide adequate watering time and don't forget to replace the battery that backs up the irrigation program.

## **INTERIOR**

1. Replace or clean your furnace filter. It should be checked once a month and replaced or cleaned as needed.
2. Have your air conditioner checked for safe operation and tuned up now so it will be ready to go the first hot day you need it. If you wait until the first heat wave to have your air conditioner serviced chances are you will have a long wait.
3. Clean the kitchen exhaust hood and air filter.
4. Check all electrical outlets for loose-fitting plugs as they are a sign of a worn out receptacle. Worn receptacles should be replaced.
5. Check your water heater. Check around the base of your water heater for evidence of leaks. If your water heater is over 5 years old, it should be checked monthly for any leakage or rusting at the bottom. If you have a gas-fired water heater, check to make sure it is venting properly.
6. Clean the clothes dryer exhaust duct, damper and space under the dryer.
7. Replace all extension cords that have become brittle, worn or damaged.
8. Inspect and clean dust from the covers of your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Replace all batteries.